

ATTENTION SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

The law now permits candidates for school board to circulate petitions jointly and be bracketed together on the ballot; also permits short nonpolitical designation of principles on petitions and ballots.

1/19/2016 Approved

Section 1 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. Except as otherwise provided in this section, an annual school election shall be held in a type II district on the third Tuesday in April. However, in any school year, the Commissioner of Education shall make any adjustments to the school budget and election calendar which may be necessary to change the annual school election date or any other school budget and election calendar date if that date coincides with a period of religious observance that limits significantly the usual activities of the followers of a particular religion or that would result in significant religious consequences for such followers. The commissioner shall inform local school boards, county clerks and boards of election of these adjustments no later than the first working day in January of the year in which the adjustments are to occur.

As used in this subsection "a period of religious observance" means any day or portion thereof on which a religious observance imposes a substantial burden on an individual's ability to vote.

An annual school election shall be held simultaneously with the general election on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in school districts in which the annual school election has been moved to that date pursuant to subsection a. of section 1 of P.L.2011, c.202 (C.19:60-1.1) or pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2012, c.78 (C.19:60-1.2). The annual school election in November shall be for the purpose of submitting a proposal to the voters for the approval of additional funds in a Type II district without a board of school estimate pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection d. of section 5 of P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-5), for the purpose of electing members of the board of education, and for any other purpose authorized by law.

b. All school elections shall be by ballot and, except as otherwise provided by P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), shall be conducted in the manner provided for general elections pursuant to Title 19 of the Revised Statutes. No party designation shall appear on any ballot to be used in a school election. At the request of one or more candidates, the ballot for a school election may include a designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative or any part thereof, as a noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a primary election.

Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-7) is amended to read as follows:

7. Each candidate to be voted upon at a school election shall be nominated directly by petition, and the procedures for such nomination shall, to the extent not inconsistent with the provisions of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-1 et al.), conform to the procedure for nominating candidates by direct petition under chapter 13 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes. Notwithstanding the provisions of R.S.19:13-5, however, a petition of nomination for such office shall be signed by at least 10 persons, one of whom may be the candidate, and filed with the secretary of the board of education on or before four p.m. of the 50th day preceding the date of the April school election, or with the county clerk on or before four p.m. of the last Monday in July preceding the November school election, as applicable. The signatures need not all appear upon a single petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of any candidate or on behalf of two or more candidates filing a joint petition. A petition for one or more candidates may include a designation in not more than three words that conveys the principles which the candidate or candidates therein named represent, but such designation shall not contain the name, or a derivative thereof or any part thereof, as a noun or an adjective of any political party entitled to participate in a primary election.

Any candidate may withdraw as a candidate in a school election by filing a notice in writing, signed by the candidate, of such withdrawal with the secretary of the board of education before the 44th day before the date of the April election or with the county clerk on the 70th day before the date of the November election, as applicable, and thereupon the name of that candidate shall be withdrawn by the secretary of the board of education or the county clerk, as may be appropriate, and shall not be printed on the ballot.

A vacancy created by a declination of nomination or withdrawal by, or death of, a nominee, or in any other manner, shall be filled under the provisions of R.S.19:13-19.

Whenever written objection to a petition of nomination hereunder shall have been made and timely filed with the secretary of the board of education or with the county clerk, as may be appropriate, the board of education shall file its determination of the objection on or before the 44th day preceding the April school election or the county clerk shall file the clerk's determination of the objection on or before the 10th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a board of education at the November school election, as applicable. The last day upon which a candidate may file with the Superior Court a verified complaint setting forth any invasion or threatened invasion of the candidate's rights under the candidate's petition of nomination shall be the 46th day before the April election or the 12th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a board of education at the November election, as applicable. The last day upon which a candidate whose petition of nomination or any affidavit thereto is defective may amend such petition or affidavit shall be the 44th day before the April election or the 10th day after the last day for the filing of petitions for candidates seeking election as a member of a board of education at the November election, as applicable. In each school district in which candidates for the office of member of a board of education will seek election at the November school election, the school business administrator thereof shall certify to the county clerk no later than the day of the holding of the primary election for the general election next occurring a statement designating the public offices to be filled at such election, and the number of such offices to be filled.

Section 8 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-8) is amended to read as follows:

8. The county clerk shall conduct the ballot draw for candidates for school board member in those school districts that hold November elections, in accordance with the procedures set forth in R.S.19:14-12. In those school districts that elect school board members at the annual April school election, the ballot draw shall be conducted as follows:

a. The drawing shall be done by the secretary of the board of education seven working days following the last day for filing a petition for the nomination of such a candidate. The person making the drawing shall make public announcement at the drawing of each name, the order in which the name is drawn and the term of office for which the drawing is made.

b. A separate drawing shall be made for each full term and for each unexpired term, respectively. The names of the several candidates for whom petitions have been filed for each of the terms shall be written upon paper slips which shall be placed in capsules of the same size, shape, color and substance and then placed in a covered box with an aperture in the top large enough to admit a person's hand and to allow the capsules to be drawn therefrom. The box shall be turned and shaken thoroughly to mix the capsules and the capsules shall be withdrawn one at a time.

c. Where there is more than one person to be elected for a given term of office, the position of the names on the ballots for each term of office shall be determined as above described. The name of the candidate for each term of office first drawn from the box shall be printed directly below the proper term for which the person was nominated and the name of the candidate next drawn shall be printed next in order, and so on, until the last name shall be drawn from the box.

d. Two or more candidates for any given term of office may notify the secretary of the board in writing or the county clerk if the annual school election is to be held in November, at least seven days before the drawing date that they wish to have their names with their chosen designation, if any, bracketed together, so that their names and designation, if any, are selected as a group at the drawing and their names and designation are printed together on the ballot. The candidates shall determine among themselves the order in which their names are to appear within the bracket prior to so notifying the secretary or the county clerk, as applicable.

The secretary of the board of education shall, within two days following the drawing, certify to the county clerk the results of the drawing.

Section 9 of P.L.1995, c.278 (C.19:60-9) is amended to read as follows:

9. The ballot for a school election shall be a single or blanket form of ballot, upon which shall be printed in bold-faced type the words "OFFICIAL SCHOOL ELECTION BALLOT" or "OFFICIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL ELECTION BALLOT," as appropriate.

Any public question which is to be submitted to the voters at a school election shall be printed in a separate space below or to the right of, as the county clerk shall determine, the listing of candidates in the election.

In the columns in which are listed the titles of the offices to be filled at a school election and the names of candidates for those offices, the title of and the names of candidates for the office of member of the regional board of education shall appear above the title of and the names of candidates for the office of member of the local board of education. With respect to either office, in the event that one or more persons are to be elected to membership thereon for a full term and one or more persons are to be elected to membership thereon to fill an unexpired term, the ballots shall designate which of the candidates to be voted for is to be elected for a full term and which for an unexpired term. In all cases in which one or more persons are to be elected for an unexpired term, the ballots shall indicate the duration of that unexpired term. The names of two or more candidates for any given term who have notified the secretary of the board or the county clerk if the annual school election is to be held in November in writing that they wish to be bracketed together with their chosen designation, if any, shall appear as a group in the appropriate location on the ballot, depending on whether the candidates are to be elected to fill an expired or an unexpired term.

All public questions to be voted upon at a school election by the voters of more than one municipality shall be placed first before any question to be voted upon at that election by the voters of a single municipality. When the public question to be voted upon by the voters of a regional school district is the amount of money to be raised for the use of the regional schools of the district, the amount of money determined to be the constituent municipality's share thereof may be identified on the ballot pursuant to N.J.S. A. 18A:13-17.

Every county clerk shall have ready for the printer a copy of the contents of official ballots required by law to be printed for use at a school election, as follows: in the case of the annual April school election, not later than the 17th day preceding that election; in the case of any special school election, not later than two business days following receipt by the clerk of official notice of the complete content of the ballot to be voted upon at that election; and in the case of the annual November school election, in accordance with the provisions of R.S.19:14-1.

The ballots for an annual school election to be held simultaneously with the general election shall be in accordance with the provisions of chapter 14 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes.

At an annual school election held simultaneously with the general election, the names of the candidates for the office of member of the board of education shall appear on the ballot separately from the names of candidates for other offices whenever possible. Any proposals for additional funds pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection d. of section 5 of P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-5) shall appear on the ballot near the names of the candidates for the office of member of the board of education whenever possible.

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education and of the clerk of each county, shall conduct a study of the impact of allowing the bracketing of candidates together and designations of candidates' principles on school election petitions and ballots. The study shall be completed and submitted to the Governor and to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), within one year following the enactment of this act. This act shall take effect immediately.